IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the original claims as follows.

1.   (Currently Amended) A method in a computer system for maintaining and digitally signing a unique, authoritative electronic record, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving an original electronic record in a repository;

generating at least some first receipt information, wherein the first receipt information includes information relating to the original electronic record, and wherein the first receipt information is prevented from being transmitted outside the repository;

prepending the first receipt information at a beginning portion of the original electronic record;

generating at least some first identifying information, wherein the first identifying information includes a provable representation of the first receipt information;

appending the first identifying information at an end portion of the original electronic record;

storing the original electronic record with the prepended first receipt information and the appended first identifying information in the repository as ~~an~~ a unique, authoritative electronic record;

receiving a request to review and optionally sign the authoritative electronic record at a remote location;

computing a ~~partial~~ partially completed message digest of the authoritative electronic record, wherein the partially completed message digest is related to a proper subset of the authoritative electronic record;

computing a complement of the proper subset of the authoritative electronic record;

transmitting to the ~~partial~~ remote location the partially completed message digest of the authoritative electronic record ~~to the remote location~~;

transmitting to the remote location the complement of the proper subset of the authoritative electronic record ~~to the remote location~~;

~~computing a~~ completing the computation of the message digest of the authoritative electronic record, at the remote location, using the ~~partial~~ partially completed message digest of the authoritative electronic record and the complement of the proper subset of the authoritative electronic record;

displaying the complement of the proper subset of the authoritative electronic record at the remote location;

allowing ~~a~~ the generation of at least some digital signature ~~to be computed~~ information at the remote location ~~using the computed~~, wherein the digital signature information is generated using a private key and the message digest ~~and a private key~~ of the authoritative electronic record;

returning the digital signature information to the repository;

receiving the digital signature information in the repository;

determining whether the digital signature information represents a valid digital signature;

amending, if the digital signature information is determined to represent a valid digital signature, the authoritative electronic record to create a signed authoritative electronic record, wherein the signed authoritative electronic record comprises the authoritative electronic record and the digital signature information;

generating at least some ~~second~~ additional receipt information, wherein the ~~second~~ additional receipt information includes information relating to the signed authoritative electronic record;

prepending the ~~second~~ additional receipt information at a beginning portion of the signed authoritative electronic record;

generating at least some ~~second~~ additional identifying information, wherein the ~~second~~ additional identifying information includes a provable representation of the additional receipt information;

appending the ~~second~~ additional identifying information at an end portion of the signed authoritative electronic record; and

~~determining whether the digital signature information represents a valid digital signature; and~~

~~amending, if the digital signature information is determined to represent a valid digital signature, the authoritative electronic record in the repository to include the digital signature information, the prepended second receipt information, and the appended second identifying information from the signed authoritative electronic record.~~

storing the signed authoritative electronic record, the additional receipt information, and the additional identifying information, in the repository as the authoritative

electronic record, wherein the signed authoritative electronic record includes the digital signature information.

2.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of ~~receiving an original electronic record~~ generating at least some first identifying information further comprises the step of adding time-stamp information to the ~~original electronic record~~ first identifying information, wherein the time-stamp information comprises the time and ~~the~~ /or date when the original electronic record is received in the repository.

3.   (Canceled)

4.   (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the first receipt information includes at least some digital signature information that is generated using a private key of the repository.

5.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the proper subset of the authoritative electronic record comprises information which has been prepended ~~to~~ at the beginning ~~portion~~ of the authoritative electronic record.

6.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the complement of the proper subset of the authoritative electronic record comprises the original electronic record and information which has been appended to the end ~~portion~~ of the original electronic record.

7.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the steps of transmitting to the ~~partial~~ remote location the partially completed message digest of the authoritative electronic record and transmitting to the remote location the complement of the proper subset of the authoritative electronic record include transmitting the partially completed message digest of the authoritative electronic record and transmitting the complement of the proper subset of the authoritative electronic record to the remote location ~~include transmitting the partial message digest and transmitting the complement of the proper subset of the authoritative electronic record to the remote location~~ in a single transmission.

8.   (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein at least one software program associated with the repository is utilized at the remote location.

9.   (Canceled)

10.   (Canceled)

11.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the ~~second~~ additional receipt information includes at least some digital signature information that is generated using a private key of the repository.

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12.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the ~~second~~ additional identifying information is generated using at least some repository information.

13.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the ~~second~~ additional identifying information is generated using at least some user information.

14.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the ~~second~~ additional identifying information is generated using at least some remote location information.

15.   (Canceled)

16.   (Currently Amended) A method in a computer system for maintaining and digitally signing a unique, authoritative electronic record, the method comprising the steps of:

providing for the receipt of an original electronic record in a repository;

providing for the generation of at least some first receipt information, wherein the first receipt information includes information relating to the original electronic record, and wherein the first receipt information is prevented from being transmitted outside the repository;

providing for the prepending of the first receipt information at a beginning portion of the original electronic record;

providing for the generation of at least some first identifying information, wherein the first identifying information includes a provable representation of the first receipt information;

providing for the appending of the first identifying information at an end portion of the original electronic record;

providing for the storage of the original electronic record with the prepended first receipt information and the appended first identifying information in the repository as ~~an~~ a unique, authoritative electronic record;

providing for the receipt of a request to review and optionally sign the authoritative electronic record at a remote location;

providing for the computation of a ~~partial~~ partially completed message digest of the authoritative electronic record, wherein the partially completed message digest is related to a proper subset of the authoritative electronic record;

providing for the computation of a complement of the proper subset of the authoritative electronic record;

providing for the transmission of the ~~partial~~ partially completed message digest ~~and~~ of the authoritative electronic record to the remote location;

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<u>providing for the transmission of</u> the complement of the proper subset of the authoritative electronic record to the remote location;

providing for the <u>completion of the</u> computation of a <u>the</u> message digest <u>of the authoritative electronic record,</u> at the remote location, using the <s>partial</s> <u>partially completed</u> message digest of the authoritative electronic record and the complement of the proper subset of the authoritative electronic record;

providing for the display of the complement of the proper subset of the authoritative electronic record at the remote location;

providing for <u>the allowance of the generation of</u> at least some digital signature information <s>to be generated</s> at the remote location<u>, wherein the digital signature information is generated</u> using <s>the computed message digest and</s> a private key <u>and the message digest of the authoritative electronic record</u>;

providing for the receipt of the digital signature information in the repository;

<u>providing for the determination of whether the digital signature information represents a valid digital signature;</u>

<u>providing for the amendment, if the digital signature information is determined to represent a valid digital signature, of the authoritative electronic record to create a signed authoritative electronic record, wherein the signed authoritative electronic record comprises the authoritative electronic record and the digital signature information;</u>

providing for the generation of at least some <s>second</s> <u>additional</u> receipt information, wherein the <s>second</s> <u>additional</u> receipt information includes information relating to the signed authoritative electronic record;

providing for the prepending of the <s>second</s> <u>additional</u> receipt information at a beginning portion of the signed authoritative electronic record;

providing for the generation of at least some <s>second</s> <u>additional</u> identifying information, wherein the <s>second</s> <u>additional</u> identifying information includes a provable representation of the <u>additional</u> receipt information;

providing for the appending of the <s>second</s> <u>additional</u> identifying information at an end portion of the signed authoritative electronic record;

providing for the <s>determination</s> <u>storing</u> of <s>whether</s> <u>the signed authoritative</u> electronic record <s>the digital signature information represents a valid digital signature; and</s>

<s>providing for the amending, if,</s> the <s>digital signature information is determined to represent a valid digital signature, of the authoritative electronic record</s> <u>additional receipt</u>

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information, and the additional identifying information, in the repository ~~to include~~ as the ~~digital signature information, the prepended second receipt information, and the appended second identifying information from the signed~~ authoritative electronic record, wherein the signed authoritative electronic record includes the digital signature information.

17.   (Currently Amended) A method for creating ~~an~~ a unique, authoritative electronic record in a repository, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving an original electronic record in a repository;

generating at least some first receipt information, wherein the first receipt information includes information relating to the original electronic record, and wherein the first receipt information is prevented from being transmitted outside the repository;

prepending the first receipt information at a beginning portion of the original electronic record;

generating at least some first identifying information, wherein the first identifying information includes a provable representation of the first receipt information;

appending the first identifying information at an end portion of the original electronic record; and

storing the original electronic record with the prepended first receipt information and the appended first identifying information in the repository as ~~an~~ a unique, authoritative electronic record.

18.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 17, wherein the step of ~~receiving an original electronic record~~ generating at least some first identifying information further comprises the step of adding time-stamp information to the ~~original electronic record~~ first identifying information, wherein the time-stamp information comprises the time and ~~the~~ /or date when the original electronic record is received in the repository.

19.   (Canceled)

20.   (Original) The method of claim 17, wherein the first receipt information includes at least some digital signature information that is generated using a private key of the repository.

21.   (Currently Amended) A method for storing an original electronic record as ~~an~~ a unique, authoritative electronic record in a repository, the method comprising the steps of:

transmitting an original electronic record to a repository;

allowing at least some first receipt information to be generated, wherein the first receipt information includes information relating to the original electronic record, and

wherein the first receipt information is prevented from being transmitted outside the repository;

allowing the first receipt information to be prepended at a beginning portion of the original electronic record;

allowing at least some first identifying information to be generated, wherein the first identifying information includes a provable representation of the first receipt information;

allowing the first identifying information to be appended at an end portion of the original electronic record; and

allowing the original electronic record to be stored with the prepended first receipt information and the appended first identifying information in the repository as ~~an~~ a unique, authoritative electronic record.

22.   (Currently Amended) A method for displaying, at a remote location, a provable representation of ~~an~~ a unique, authoritative electronic record ~~at a remote location~~ stored in a repository, without compromising the uniqueness of the authoritative electronic record, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving a request to review and optionally sign ~~an authoritative electronic record stored in a repository,~~ at a remote location a unique, authoritative electronic record stored in a repository, wherein the authoritative electronic record includes at least some first receipt information, which has been prepended at a beginning portion of the authoritative electronic record, and at least some first identifying information, which has been appended at an end portion of the ~~original~~ authoritative electronic record, wherein the first receipt information is prevented from being transmitted outside the repository, and wherein the first identifying information includes a provable representation of the first receipt information;

computing ~~a partial message digest of a proper subset of the authoritative electronic record;~~

~~computing~~ at the repository a complement of a ~~the~~ proper subset of the authoritative electronic record, wherein the complement of the proper subset of the authoritative electronic record is a provable representation of the authoritative electronic record;

~~transmitting the partial message digest of the authoritative electronic record to the remote location;~~

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transmitting the complement of the proper subset of the authoritative electronic record to the remote location;

~~allowing a message digest to be computed, at the remote location, using the partial message digest and the complement of the proper subset of the authoritative electronic record;~~ and

allowing the complement of the proper subset of the authoritative electronic record to be displayed at the remote location, ~~wherein the complement of the proper subset of the authoritative electronic record is a provable representation of the authoritative electronic record.~~

23. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 22, wherein the proper subset of the authoritative electronic record comprises information, which has been prepended ~~to~~ at the beginning ~~portion~~ of the authoritative electronic record.

24. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 22, wherein the complement of the proper subset of the authoritative electronic record comprises the original electronic record and information, which has been appended to the end ~~portion~~ of the original electronic record.

25. (Canceled)

26. (Canceled)

27. (Canceled)

28. (Original) The method of claim 22, wherein at least one software program associated with the repository is utilized at the remote location.

29. (Canceled)

30. (Currently Amended) A method for generating a digital signature at a remote location ~~and transmitting the digital signature to~~ for a unique, authoritative electronic record which resides in a repository, without compromising the uniqueness of the authoritative electronic record, the method comprising the steps of:

~~receiving~~ computing at the repository a complement of a ~~the~~ proper subset of the authoritative electronic record ~~from a repository;~~

~~receiving a partial message digest of the authoritative electronic record from a repository;~~

~~computing a message digest of~~ transmitting to the ~~authoritative electronic record using the~~ remote location the complement of the proper subset of the authoritative electronic record ~~and the partial;~~

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computing at the repository a partially completed message digest of the authoritative electronic record, wherein the partially completed message digest is related to the proper subset of the authoritative electronic record;

transmitting to the remote location the partially completed message digest of the authoritative electronic record;

~~allowing a private key to be used to generate~~ allowing the computation of the message digest of the authoritative electronic record to be completed at the remote location using the partially completed message digest of the authoritative electronic record and the complement of the proper subset of the authoritative electronic record; and

allowing the generation of at least some digital signature information; at the remote location, wherein the digital signature information is generated using a private key and the message digest of the authoritative electronic record.

~~transmitting the digital signature information to the repository.~~

31. (Currently Amended) A method for including a valid digital signature, computed at a remote location, in ~~an~~ a unique, authoritative electronic record stored in a repository, without compromising the uniqueness of the authoritative electronic record, wherein the authoritative electronic record includes at least some first receipt information which has been prepended at a beginning portion of the authoritative electronic record, and at least some first identifying information which has been appended at an end portion of the authoritative electronic record, wherein the first receipt information is prevented from being transmitted outside the repository, and wherein the first identifying information includes a provable representation of the first receipt information, the method comprising the steps of:

~~receiving~~ receiving in the repository at least some digital signature information, wherein the digital signature information was generated at a remote location using a private key and a message digest, wherein the message digest ~~is~~ was computed using a ~~partial message digest of the authoritative electronic record and a complement of~~ partially completed message digest of the authoritative electronic record and a complement of a proper subset of the authoritative electronic record, wherein the partially completed message digest is related to the proper subset of the authoritative electronic record;

determining whether the digital signature information represents a valid digital signature; ~~and~~

amending, if the digital signature information is determined to represent a valid digital signature, the authoritative electronic record to create a signed authoritative

electronic record, wherein the signed authoritative electronic record comprises the authoritative electronic record and the digital signature information~; and

storing the signed authoritative electronic record in the repository as the authoritative electronic record.

32. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 31, wherein the step of amending, if the digital signature information is determined to represent a valid digital signature, an authoritative electronic record to create a signed authoritative electronic record includes the steps of:

prepending digital signature information comprising a digital signature to the beginning portion of the authoritative electronic record; and

appending digital signature information comprising a provable representation of the prepended digital signature information to the end portion of the authoritative electronic record.

33. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 31, wherein the step of amending, if the digital signature information is determined to represent a valid digital signature, an authoritative electronic record to create a signed authoritative electronic record includes the steps of:

prepending at least some signature receipt information to the beginning portion of the signed authoritative electronic record, wherein the signed authoritative electronic record already includes the digital signature information, and wherein the signature receipt information comprises a unique representation of information relating to the signed authoritative electronic record; and

appending at least some identifying information to the end portion of the signed authoritative electronic record, wherein the signed authoritative electronic record already includes the digital signature information, and wherein the identifying information comprises a provable representation of the signature receipt information.

34. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 31, further including the steps of:

receiving a request, from a remote location, to review and optionally sign the signed authoritative electronic record stored in the repository, wherein the signed authoritative electronic record includes previously validated digital signature information;

computing a partial at the repository a partially completed message digest of the signed authoritative electronic record, wherein the partially completed message digest is related to a proper subset of the signed authoritative electronic record;

computing at the repository a complement of the proper subset of the signed authoritative electronic record;

transmitting to the ~~partial~~ remote location the partially completed message digest of the signed authoritative electronic record ~~to the remote location~~;

transmitting to the remote location the complement of the proper subset of the signed authoritative electronic record ~~to the remote location~~;

allowing ~~a message digest to be computed, at~~ the ~~remote location, using~~ computation of the ~~partial~~ message digest of the signed authoritative electronic record to be completed at the remote location using the partially completed message digest of the signed authoritative electronic record and the complement of the proper subset of the signed authoritative electronic record;

allowing the complement of the proper subset of the signed authoritative electronic record to be to be displayed at the remote location;

receiving in the repository at least some new digital signature information, wherein the new digital signature information was generated at the remote location using a private key and the ~~computed~~ message digest of the signed authoritative electronic record;

determining whether the new digital signature information represents a valid digital signature; and

amending, if the new digital signature information is determined to represent a valid digital signature, the signed authoritative electronic record to include the new digital signature information.

35.   (Canceled)

36.   (Currently Amended) A computer system for maintaining and updating a unique, authoritative electronic record, the system comprising:

means for receiving an original electronic record in a repository;

means for generating at least some first receipt information, wherein the first receipt information includes information relating to the original electronic record, and wherein the first receipt information is prevented from being transmitted outside the repository;

means for prepending the first receipt information at a beginning portion of the original electronic record;

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means for generating at least some first identifying information, wherein the first identifying information includes a provable representation of the first receipt information;

means for appending the first identifying information at an end portion of the original electronic record;

means for storing the original electronic record with the prepended first receipt information and the appended first identifying information in the repository as ~~an~~a unique, authoritative electronic record;

means for receiving a request to review and optionally sign the authoritative electronic record at a remote location;

means for computing a ~~partial~~partially completed message digest of the authoritative electronic record, wherein the partially completed message digest is related to a proper subset of the authoritative electronic record;

means for computing a complement of the proper subset of the authoritative electronic record;

means for transmitting ~~the partial message digest and~~to the remote location the ~~complement of the proper subset~~ partially completed message digest of the authoritative electronic record ~~to the remote location~~;

means for ~~computing a~~ transmitting to the remote location the complement of the proper subset of the authoritative electronic record;

means for completing the computation of the message digest of the authoritative electronic record, at the remote location, using the ~~partial~~partially completed message digest of the authoritative electronic record and the complement of the proper subset of the authoritative electronic record;

means for displaying the complement of the proper subset of the authoritative electronic record at the remote location;

means for allowing the generation of at least some digital signature information ~~to be generated~~ at the remote location, wherein the digital signature information is generated using ~~the computed message digest and~~ a private key and the message digest of the authoritative electronic record;

means for receiving the digital signature information in the repository;

means for determining whether the digital signature information represents a valid digital signature;

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means for amending, if the digital signature information is determined to represent a valid digital signature, the authoritative electronic record to create a signed authoritative electronic record, wherein the signed authoritative electronic record comprises the authoritative electronic record and the digital signature information;

means for generating at least some ~~second~~ additional receipt information, wherein the ~~second~~ additional receipt information includes information relating to the signed authoritative electronic record;

means for prepending the ~~second~~ additional receipt information at a beginning portion of the signed authoritative electronic record;

means for generating at least some ~~second~~ additional identifying information, wherein the ~~second~~ additional identifying information includes a provable representation of the additional receipt information;

means for appending the ~~second~~ additional identifying information at an end portion of the signed authoritative electronic record; and

means for ~~determining whether~~ storing the signed authoritative electronic record ~~the digital signature information represents a valid digital signature; and~~

~~means for amending, if the digital signature information is determined to represent a valid digital signature,~~ the ~~authoritative electronic record~~ additional receipt information, and the additional identifying information, in the repository ~~to include the digital signature information,~~ as the ~~prepended second receipt information, and the appended second identifying information from the signed~~ authoritative electronic record, wherein the signed authoritative electronic record includes the digital signature information.

37.   (Currently Amended) A system for creating ~~an~~ a unique, authoritative electronic record in a repository, the system comprising:

a software program that is capable of receiving an original electronic record in a repository;

a software program that is capable of generating at least some first receipt information, wherein the first receipt information includes information relating to the original electronic record, and wherein the first receipt information is prevented from being transmitted outside the repository;

a software program that is capable of prepending the first receipt information at a beginning portion of the original electronic record;

a software program that is capable of generating at least some first identifying information, wherein the first identifying information includes a provable representation of the first receipt information;

a software program that is capable of appending the first identifying information at an end portion of the original electronic record; ~~and~~

a software program that is capable of storing the original electronic record with the prepended first receipt information and the appended first identifying information in the repository as ~~an~~ a unique, authoritative electronic record.

38.   (Currently Amended) A system for obtaining a digital signature ~~on an~~ from a remote location for a unique, authoritative electronic record ~~stored~~ , which resides in a repository, without compromising the uniqueness of the authoritative electronic record, the system comprising:

a software program that is capable of receiving a request to review, and optionally sign ~~an authoritative electronic record, stored in a repository~~, at a remote location a unique, authoritative electronic record stored in a repository, wherein the authoritative electronic record includes at least some first receipt information which has been prepended at a beginning portion of the authoritative electronic record, and at least some first identifying information, which has been appended at an end portion of the authoritative electronic record, wherein the first receipt information is prevented from being transmitted outside the repository, and wherein the first identifying information includes a provable representation of the first receipt information;

~~a software program that is capable of computing a partial message digest of a proper subset of the authoritative electronic record;~~

a software program that is capable of computing at the repository a complement of a ~~the~~ proper subset of the authoritative electronic record;

a software program that is capable of computing at the repository a partially completed message digest of the authoritative electronic record, wherein the partially completed message digest is related to the proper subset of the authoritative electronic record;

a software program that is capable of controlling the transmission of the complement of the proper subset of the authoritative electronic record, ~~the partial message digest~~ and the ~~complement of the proper subset~~ partially completed message digest of the authoritative electronic record to the remote location;

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a software program that is capable of allowing ~~a~~the computation of the message digest of the authoritative electronic record to be ~~computed,~~ completed at the remote location, using the ~~partial~~ partially completed message digest of the authoritative electronic record and the complement of the proper subset of the authoritative electronic record;

a software program that is capable of allowing the complement of the proper subset of the authoritative electronic record to be displayed at the remote location; and

a software program that is capable of allowing the generation of at least some digital signature information ~~to be~~ at the remote location, wherein the digital signature information is generated using ~~the computed message digest and~~ a private key, and the message digest of the authoritative electronic record.

39.   (Currently Amended) A system for including a valid digital signature, computed at a remote location, in ~~an~~a unique, authoritative electronic record stored in a repository, without compromising the uniqueness of the authoritative electronic record, wherein the authoritative electronic record includes at least some first receipt information which has been prepended at a beginning portion of the authoritative electronic record, and at least some first identifying information which has been appended at an end portion of the authoritative electronic record, wherein the first receipt information is prevented from being transmitted outside the repository, and wherein the first identifying information includes a provable representation of the first receipt information, the system comprising:

a software program that is capable of receiving in the repository at least some digital signature information ~~produced,~~ wherein the digital signature information was generated at a remote location using a ~~computed~~ private key and a message digest ~~and a private key~~, wherein the ~~computed~~ message digest ~~is generated~~ was computed using a ~~partial~~ partially completed message digest of the authoritative electronic record and a complement of a proper subset of the authoritative electronic record, wherein the partially completed message digest is related to the proper subset of the authoritative electronic record;

a software program that is capable of determining whether the digital signature information represents a valid digital signature;

a software program that is capable of amending, if the digital signature information is determined to represent a valid digital signature, the authoritative electronic record to create a signed authoritative electronic record, wherein the signed authoritative electronic record ~~includes~~ comprises the authoritative electronic record and the digital signature information; and

a software program that is capable of storing the signed authoritative electronic record in the repository as the authoritative electronic record.

40.   (Currently Amended) A computer program product for obtaining a digital signature on a single authoritative copy of an original electronic record comprising:

a computer usable medium and computer readable code embodied on the computer usable medium for obtaining a digital signature on a single authoritative copy of an original electronic record, the computer readable code comprising:

computer readable program code devices configured to cause the computer to effect the storing of an original electronic record as an authoritative electronic record in a repository;

computer readable program code devices configured to cause the computer to effect the transmission of a <u>complement of a proper subset of the authoritative electronic record and a partially completed message digest of the authoritative electronic record, wherein the complement of the proper subset of the authoritative electronic record is a</u> provable representation of ~~an~~ <u>the</u> authoritative electronic record ~~from a repository,~~ <u>and wherein the partially completed message digest of the authoritative electronic record is related</u> to ~~a remote location, wherein~~ the ~~provable representation of the authoritative electronic record includes a partial message digest of the authoritative electronic record and a complement of a~~ proper subset of the authoritative electronic record;

computer readable program code devices configured to cause the computer to effect the <u>allowance of the</u> generation of at least some digital signature information, wherein the digital signature information is produced using a computed message digest and a private key, wherein the computed message digest is generated using the ~~partial~~ <u>partially completed</u> message digest of the authoritative electronic record and the complement of ~~a~~ <u>the</u> proper subset of the authoritative electronic record;

computer readable program code devices configured to cause the computer to effect the transmission of the digital signature information from the remote location to the repository and the receipt of the digital signature information in the repository;

computer readable program code devices configured to cause the computer to effect the amending, if the received digital signature information is determined to be valid, of the authoritative electronic record in the repository to include at least some of the received digital signature information.

41. (New) The method of claim 30, further comprising the step of allowing the digital signature information to be returned to the repository.

42. (New) The method of claim 30, wherein the proper subset of the authoritative electronic record comprises information which has been prepended at the beginning of the authoritative electronic record.

43. (New) The method of claim 30, wherein the complement of the proper subset of the authoritative electronic record comprises the original electronic record and information which has been appended to the end of the original electronic record.

44. (New) The method of claim 30, wherein the steps of transmitting to the remote location the complement of the proper subset of the authoritative electronic record and transmitting to the remote location the partially completed message digest of the authoritative electronic record include transmitting the complement of the proper subset of the authoritative electronic record and transmitting the partially completed message digest of the authoritative electronic record to the remote location in a single transmission.

45. (New) The method of claim 30, wherein at least one software program associated with the repository is utilized at the remote location.

46. (New) The method of claim 33, wherein the signature receipt information includes at least some digital signature information that is generated using a private key of the repository.

47. (New) The method of claim 33, wherein the identifying information that is appended to the end portion of the signed authoritative electronic record is generated using at least some repository information.

48. (New) The method of claim 33, wherein the identifying information that is appended to the end portion of the signed authoritative electronic record is generated using at least some user information.

49. (New) The method of claim 33, wherein the identifying information that is appended to the end portion of the signed authoritative electronic record is generated using at least some remote location information.

50. (New) The method of claim 33, wherein the identifying information that is appended to the end portion of the signed authoritative electronic record includes at least time and/or date information.